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AN EVALUATION OF PROMOTION OPPORTUNITY IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY AND ITS EFFECTS ON OFFICER RETENTION

by

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AN EVALUATION OF PROMOTION OPPORTUNITY IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY AND ITS EFFECTS ON OFFICER RETENTION

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April 30, 1966

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INTRODUCTION

In our society today, it is generally accepted that human resources are the most valuable asset possessed by an organization. The basis of this premise is simple--regardless of the state of technology achieved, it remains the task of people to perform the functions and make the decisions which are vital to the survival and well-being of any organization.

Technological advances increase the importance of the human element in the sound management of organizations. Freed from many routine functions, including less important decision-making tasks, executives are able to devote a greater percentage of their time to more critical matters. Technological process therefore necessitates the recruitment and retention of high caliber management talent as an aid to organizational vitality.

The major personnel administration tasks of recruitment, training, promotion, discharge, and retirement must be well planned and capably administered. Attempts must be made to maximize the effectiveness of all of these programs, since unsound practices in any one of them could easily negate the best administration of the others.

During the past decade, personnel problems have plagued our military establishment. The scope of this problem is well illustrated in the following statement by Secretary of the Navy Paul H. Nitze:

> The most important problem which confronts me today as Secretary of the Navy involves procurement of personnel and the retention of skilled, experienced military personnel as careerests in the naval service.[1]

In itemizing the various personnel problems facing the Navy today, Mr. Nitze includes the following:

> . . . Of the 76 thousand officers on active duty in the Navy, approximately 60% serve in the unrestricted line, the people who operate the sea-going forces of the fleet. . . . In recent years, the Navy has experienced a history of serious retention problems among junior officer ranks. . . .
>
> Two chief reasons are cited by the junior officers who elect to leave the service. The first involves deprivation of home life and prolonged separation.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The other basic cause of junior officer separation is more susceptible to remedies. It involves such factors as promotion opportunity, . . .[2]

Promotion opportunity of unrestricted line officers of the Regular Navy will be discussed in the chapters which follow. Proposed remedies for this personnel problem will be examined in an attempt to evaluate their effectiveness in improving this aspect of personnel management in the Navy.

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[1] U. S., Department of the Navy, Office of the Comptroller, Budget Digest--Fiscal Year 1966 (NAVSO P-1355), November 30, 1965, p. 3.

[2] Ibid., p. 4.

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[1] G. G. Chandler and Lucien Shaw, Digest of the Decisions of the Comptroller General, Number Twenty-Fourth Year (July 1944 - October 30, 1945), p. 6.

[2] Ibid., p. 8.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

Promotion and Promotion Systems

Role in personnel administration

> Opportunity for advancement and the chance to make the best possible use of one's capacities form one of the wellsprings of human motivation.[1]

This statement, illustrating the importance of promotion opportunity to the individual, is strengthened by the cultural aspects of promotion as noted by another writer:

> In our society promotions are much coveted. Most employees . . . have a desire to get ahead. . . . The concept of starting at the bottom of the ladder when one is young and rising in status and income as one grows older is part of our culture. . . . Because of the way advancement is looked upon by the majority in our society, it is important that organizations adopt and follow sound promotion policies.[2]

The establishment and administration of promotion practices which act to motivate the individual in our society is therefore a major task facing personnel management in any organization.

> The absence of such a policy is largely responsible for the sinking of unknown numbers of men and women of high potentiality into a state of passive acceptance of their

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[1]O. Glenn Stahl, Public Personnel Administration (5th ed.; New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 109.

[2]Dale S. Beach, Personnel: The Management of People at Work (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1965), pp. 290-291.

present work and environment as their proper sphere.[1] Another writer, in a text dealing with the civil service, also stresses the importance of the promotion function in personnel administration:

> The devising of formal methods of selection for promotion which shall effectively pick out the best qualified is one of the most difficult problems in the whole field of personnel administration. The difficulties are far greater than those encountered in recruitment; and the consequences far more serious.[2]

Definitions

Basic to further discussion of "promotion" and "promotion systems" is a clear definition of these words.

Various writers define promotion in slightly different terms, however, most of the definitions include many common elements. The basic definition most appropriate to the discussion in this paper is: "A promotion is a reassignment of the individual to a job of higher rank."[3] Beach, in expanding this definition notes that it normally includes some, or all, of the following elements:

1) More demands on the individual promoted.

2) Greater scope of responsibility.

3) Increase in pay or salary.

4) Higher status symbols, such as title and authority.

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[1]Walter Dill Scott, Robert C. Clothier, and William R. Spriegel, Personnel Management (5th ed.; New York: McGraw-Hill Co., Inc., 1954), p. 16.

[2]Lewis Mayers, The Federal Service: A Study of the System of Personnel Administration of the U. S. Government (New York: Appleton, 1922), p. 317.

[3]Beach, p. 290.

5) Greater freedom in job and less close supervision.[1]

An additional element, which may be inferred from the five above, is specifically mentioned by other writers:

6) Increase in prestige and privileges.

Leonard D. White, in discussing promotions in the civil service, defines a "promotion system" as " . . . the aggregate of laws, rules, and practices which govern the promotions in any governmental agency."[2] This definition will apply to the discussion of promotion systems throughout this paper.

Objectives of a promotion system

Various authors emphasize different minor objectives of a promotion system, but there is a commonality regarding major objectives. Two writings are set forth below to illustrate this point and facilitate later summarization of major objectives of a sound promotion system. O. Glenn Stahl has written:

> An ideal promotion policy is not just a sugar plum for employees. It is, first of all, a plan to insure management that it will have the benefit of the best talent in the organization for the toughest jobs and a reasonable explanation for the promotions it makes when its actions are questioned. This is at least half the case. The other half is to insure employees that promotions are made strictly on the basis of merit and opportunities are broad and open so as to minimize the dangers of dead ends or unfairness.[3]

Another writer in the field of public personnel administration sets forth promotion system goals as follows:

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Leonard D. White, Introduction to the Study of Public Administration (3d ed.; New York: The MacMillan Co., 1950), p. 400 n.

[3] Stahl, p. 123.

> The principle object of a promotion system is to secure the best possible incumbents for the higher positions, while maintaining the morale of the whole organization. The main interest to be served is the public interest, not the personal interest of members of the official group concerned. The public interest is best secured when reasonable opportunities exist for all qualified employees, when really superior civil servants are enabled to move as rapidly up the promotion ladder as their merits deserve and as vacancies occur, and when selection for promotion is made on the sole basis of merit. For the merit system ought to apply as specifically in making promotions as in original recruitment.[1]

The two excerpts above can be summarized to provide four major objectives of a promotion system:

1) Insure higher positions in the organization are occupied by the best-qualified people available.

2) Serve the best interests of the organization as opposed to those of individuals or individual groups.

3) Provide a system that has the confidence of those whose careers it governs. This includes reasonable and equitable opportunity for promotion.

4) Provide for promotions based chiefly on merit (as opposed to seniority).

The fourth objective--merit as opposed to seniority in promotion selection--is currently receiving renewed attention in the Navy. Detailed examination of this objective will be pursued later in this chapter.

U. S. Navy vs. civilian promotion

Up to this point, little has been said, of a specific nature, concerning the promotion system of the U. S. Navy. The

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[1] White, pp. 400-401.

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intention of the author has been to establish basic tenets of promotion applicable to various types of organizations--business, civil service and military. When specific elements of non-military promotion criteria are examined, however, there are some which are not applicable to the Navy. A prime example of this is the extensive discussions, in most writings, which deal with the advantages/disadvantages of promotion from within as opposed to external hiring in the filling of vacancies. Except for a few inter-service transfers of officers from the other services, under Public Law 85-599, there is no counterpart to this problem in the Navy.

A significant difference exists in the basic role promotion plays in the career of a naval officer compared to that of a civilian. In most non-military pursuits, provision is made for a man to rise to a position commensurate with his ability and to remain in such a position throughout the remainder of his career. This option is not available to naval officers, except in a few cases and most of these are in senior ranks--captain and above. The Navy's promotion policy of "promotion up-or-out" terminates the careers of many officers before they desire to leave the service. Additionally, except for factors such as assignment to command billets and the receipt of decorations, awards and commendations, promotion is the sole sign of outward success for a military officer. As noted earlier, promotion is highly important to the individual in our society--to a naval officer this is especially true, for it usually determines whether or not he may continue to pursue his chosen career.

Seniority vs. merit

Most literature dealing with promotion criteria includes considerable discussion on the roles of seniority and merit in making promotion selections. As noted earlier, some present-day writers stress that merit should be used as the main, if not sole, criterion. Other authors note some advantages of seniority, however, these "advantages" are often based on deficiencies in promotion systems. Since the question of seniority vs. merit forms the foundation of the discussion in the chapters which follow, the advantages and disadvantages of each will now be examined.

Seniority, simply stated, is "years of service." Expanding this definition slightly as it applies to most military, and some non-military, organizations, the definition becomes: "years of service in present rank or grade."

Among the attributes of using seniority as the principal criterion for promotion are the following:

1) Impartiality--which acts to eliminate charges of favoritism on the part of candidates for promotion. Dale Yoder notes that, in part, seniority is used as a criterion " . . . because objective measures of an employee's worth, contribution, and potential are generally not available."[1]

2) Cultural basis, as set forth in the following excerpt from the writings of Dale S. Beach:

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[1]Dale Yoder, Personnel Management and Industrial Relations (4th ed.; Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1956), p. 615.

> Seniority fits in with the cultural expectations of mankind. From primitive tribal society through modern civilization greater benefits, status, respect and privileges have accrued to older people.[1]

3) Up to a certain point, employee proficiency increases with length of service. However, the questionable value of this advantage is noted in a discussion of seniority in government organizations:

> Overemphasis on "years of experience" still plagues many agencies in their effort to achieve objectivity in selections for promotions. Quite often the highly touted "20 years of experience" is merely one year of experience 20 times.[2]

4) Seniority acts to reward employees for "long and faithful service."

The shortcomings of using seniority as the chief promotion criterion are listed in abundance by present-day writers in the field of personnel administration. The most often mentioned are the following:

1) May result in unqualified people occupying important positions, with a resultant deterioration of the whole organization.

2) Weakens the incentive to excel in present job with two-fold results: productivity is lowered and the retention of talented, ambitious personnel is reduced.

3) Unqualified people in leadership positions tend to undermine morale.[3]

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[1]Beach, pp. 297-298.

[2]Stahl, pp. 109-110.

[3]Beach, p. 298.

It requires but a cursory examination of the above to see that the limited advantages, attributed to seniority as a promotion criterion, are highly debatable. On the other hand, the disadvantages include potentially disastrous effects on an organization.

Prior to discussion of merit as a promotion criterion, a definition of the word as applied to promotion practices will be established. Of the many texts and articles the author has read on promotion practices, nearly all discuss "merit" in laudatory terms without providing a suitable definition. Webster defines "merit" as the " . . . quality of deserving well . . . . worth; value; excellence . . . . something deserving reward, . . ."[1] Based on this definition and the connotations derived from various readings, the following will be used as a definition of "promotions based on merit": "The policy of promoting, from among the available candidates, those persons most deserving, based on quality of performance in present and past positions, and demonstrated ability and potential to assume the duties of the higher-level positions."

The main advantages of good promotion systems, which use merit as the chief criterion for selection, are:

1) Vacancies are filled with the best available people.

2) The stagnation of promotion opportunity, with its attendant lowering of morale, is avoided when the opportunity to reach the higher levels is an actuality.

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[1] Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language (College Edition; New York: The World Publishing Co., 1962).

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

3) Increases the incentive of employees to perform to the limit of their abilities in present jobs, thus contributing to the productivity of the organization.

4) Acts as an incentive for talented, ambitious employees to remain with the organization resulting in a general upgrading of personnel quality.[1]

Providing a promotion system is wisely administered, there appears to be no specific disadvantages in the use of merit as the chief criterion in promotion selections. At least two precautionary aspects of this policy have been set forth, however. One of these deals with the avoidance of apparent favoritism:

> In principle almost all people agree that promotions should be based on merit. Conflicts arise when promotions are made on some basis that appears to be not on merit but on favoritism.[2]

The second aspect that bears attention is the degree of emphasis placed on advancement:

> Any program that overemphasizes the necessity for "getting ahead" may only make employees feel a sense of inadequacy and may eventually decrease their overall usefulness. Here, as in so many fields, moderation is the watchword.[3]

From the preceding discussion of promotion criteria, it should be apparent that merit best serves " . . . the good of the service--the ultimate criterion."[4] Secondly, seniority as a

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[1]White, pp. 400-401; and Stahl, pp. 123-127.

[2]Scott, Clothier, and Spriegel, p. 227.

[3]Stahl, p. 127.

[4]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 114.

[illegible] the tendency of [illegible] to develop in [illegible] of [illegible] activities to [illegible] that, [illegible] [illegible] of the [illegible] of the [illegible].

[illegible] is [illegible] to the [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] in a [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible].[1]

[illegible] a [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible], [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

promotion criterion is perhaps best applied on a "when other things are equal" basis.

A Criticism of the U. S. Navy Promotion System

During the past decade, the Navy's promotion system has received strong, sporadic criticism based on its failure to retain talented young men as career naval officers. This criticism has been aimed primarily at the limited opportunity for outstanding officers to advance at a more rapid rate than their less-qualified contemporaries. The arguments of those who feel a change in the system is necessary, if the Navy is to improve its retention of highly-qualified young officers, is set forth in the following:

> Our promotion system does not permit us to recognize adequately that officers develop at different rates, depending on individual potential. The system provides an arbitrary "normal" promotion schedule. . . . It is a conveyor belt, on which "we all grow old together". It is the seniority system with selectivity at the promotion point--not so much promotion selectivity as rejection selectivity.[1]

This particular criticism of the Navy's system is not directed at the question of whether the "best fitted" are selected from among those "in-zone" officers considered for promotion, but at the limited "early selection" of outstanding officers.

Interest in this incentive and retention aspect of the Navy promotion system has been strongly renewed by two current developments. The first of these is revived Congressional

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[1]R. G. Alexander, LCDR, U. S. Navy, and W. L. Read, LT, U. S. Navy, "Let's Get Rid of the Conveyor Belt!" United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 83, No. 9 (September, 1957), 940.

[illegible] [illegible] in [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

interest in the Bolte Committee recommendations for amendment of the Officer Personnel Act of 1947. The Bolte Committee originally submitted its report of recommended changes five years ago. This report proposes a wide range of officer career legislation, including changes in the laws dealing with promotions in all of the military services. Up to now, it has been rejected by Congressional Committeemen chiefly because of its complexity and bulk. A condensed "Baby Bolte" bill is being prepared by the Department of Defense at the time of this writing.[1]

The second cause for renewed interest in promotion opportunity is the recently completed work of the Navy's Retention Task Force. This group, established by the Secretary of the Navy and headed by Rear Admiral John M. Alford, recently completed an extensive one and one-half year study encompassing nearly every aspect of enlisted and officer personnel problems in the Navy. The final report of this group's findings and recommendations is in the process of publication at this time. A revolutionary change to the present Navy promotion system is recommended in this report.[2]

The changes in the Navy promotion system that would result from implementation of the recommendations of the Bolte Committee and of the Alford Task Force will be examined in Chapter IV of this paper.

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[1]Navy Times (East Edition), January 26, 1966, p. 1.

[2]Interview with a member of the Navy Retention Task Force, Washington, D. C., February 14, 1966.

Statement of Problem

This paper will examine and evaluate the question of whether or not the present promotion system of the U. S. Navy provides sufficient opportunity for the outstanding young officer to advance in rank at a more rapid rate than his less-qualified contemporaries.

Scope of Problem

In the chapters which follow, the discussion is limited to the promotion opportunity of unrestricted line officers of the Regular Navy with assigned classification designation numbers 1100 (surface ship and submarine) and 1310 (aviation). The complexities involved in the promotion of officers to flag rank (above captain) further limits the scope of this paper to a discussion of promotions up through the rank of captain.

No attempt will be made to quantitatively relate promotion opportunity to retention. However, the promotion system will be examined to evaluate the extent to which it rewards outstanding performance and, in so doing, improves the attractiveness of a naval career to highly-qualified young officers.

Plan of Presentation

Since an understanding of the Navy's promotion system is basic to the evaluation of any of the products of this system, Chapter II will set forth the legal and administrative framework for the promotion of naval officers.

Chapter III will present statistics on promotion opportunities for the ranks of lieutenant through captain for the

past ten years (fiscal years 1957 through 1966). The data will be analyzed and discussed to determine whether there has been sufficient opportunity, in recent years, for promotion at a rate faster than that of the "conveyor belt."

Recommendations for adjusting the promotion rate of officers, based on relative performance and potential, will be presented and evaluated in Chapter IV.

Conclusions will be set forth in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

THE U. S. NAVY OFFICER PROMOTION SYSTEM

Objective

The basic objective of the naval officer promotion system is to provide superior leadership to the Navy by insuring ". . . that those who do reach the senior grades are the best fitted to perform the military requirements of those grades and, that they reach these grades at ages consistent with the military requirements of the grades, . . .[1]

Brief History

> Before 1900, promotion in the Navy was solely by seniority. The requirements were: Keep your digestion in order and refrain from striking your superior officer. The result was inevitable; all were promoted except those who were notoriously too bad, and they had to be really bad. Some few failed of promotion because of poor health, but even that had to be pretty hopeless.[2]

These strict seniority practices, when applied to the pyramidal rank structure of the Navy, resulted in stagnation of promotions and an officer corps of questionable quality. Additionally, most officers were overage for the grade in which serving; those who

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[1]U. S., Department of the Navy, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Officer Fact Book (NAVPERS 15898), Change No. 9 of 29 June 1965, Chap. 6, p. 6. Cited hereafter as Officer Fact Book.

[2]William S. Sims, Admiral, U. S. Navy (Ret.), "Promotion by Selection," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 60, No. 6 (June, 1934), 769.

lived long enough to become admiral served only a short time--one week to a few years--before reaching retirement age.[1]

To correct the above deficiencies, in 1899, a board of flag officers was instituted empowered to "select out" a specified number of officers each year, such selections to be confined to the grades above lieutenant (junior grade). This board became known as the "plucking board." This procedure of "selection out" experienced growing unpopularity chiefly as a result of the stigma attached to those officers "selected out."[2] The action of "plucking boards" was a somewhat effective, although brutal, method of improving the quality of the naval officer corps and providing for more reasonable promotion rates.[3]

As a result of growing resentment against "selection out", a " . . . second regulatory measure was passed in 1916 and, if nothing more can be said of the plucking board, it must be admitted that, through its very unpopularity, it gave us our present (1934) method of 'selection up'."[4]

The above actions of the Navy spearheaded the move away from strict seniority promotions in the U. S. military services. With minor modifications, such as changes in age-in-grade and time-in-grade requirements, the promotion system used by the Navy

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[1] Ibid.

[2] C. R. Brown, LT, U. S. Navy, "Promotion, Past and Future," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 60, No. 2 (February, 1934), 159.

[3] Sims, United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 60, No. 6, 769.

[4] Brown, United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 60, No. 2, 160.

today--"selection up", based on selection board action--dates back to 1916.[1]

The promotion of officers in the naval service today is a product of three major inter-related factors. The first of these is the legislative authorization for such action. The laws governing the naval promotion system are contained in the Officer Personnel Act (amended) of 1947 which has been codified in Title 10, U. S. Code.[2] These laws establish the legal framework and broad guidelines for the operation of the other two factors--the administrative actions of the Secretary of the Navy and the actions of selection boards in determining which officers are to be promoted.

The U. S. Navy Officer Corps

Rank structure

For the reader who is not familiar with the officer rank structure within the Navy, the following are the ranks, in ascending order, which will be discussed in this paper: ensign, lieutenant (junior grade), lieutenant, lieutenant commander, commander, and captain. Official abbreviations of these may be used in various parts of this paper; these are: ENS, LTJG, LT, LCDR, CDR, and CAPT, respectively.

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[1] U. S., Department of the Navy, Bureau of Naval Personnel, "History of the U. S. Navy Promotion System" (unpublished collection of articles and correspondence; in files of the Bureau).

[2] Officer Fact Book, Chap. 6, p. 5.

Temporary and permanent appointments

An explanation, at this point, of temporary and permanent appointments, as utilized in the naval promotion system, will aid in understanding much of the later discussion in this chapter.

Temporary appointments: All promotions of male officers in the Navy are made by temporary appointments in the next higher grade. Temporary appointments are made from approved promotion lists, as vacancies in the temporary grade structure occur, after selectees have met prescribed qualifications, or in the case of ensigns, when they become eligible for promotion upon the expiration of the prescribed service in grade (currently, eighteen months).[1]

Permanent appointments: These are not promotions in rank. Permanent appointments are made from the temporary list, by seniority, without selection board action, as vacancies occur in the permanent grade structure of the Navy. A permanent appointment usually lags a temporary appointment (to the same rank) by several years. The permanent appointment bears the same date of rank as the temporary, but has a later effective date; it does not affect either pay or lineal list seniority.[2]

Discussion of promotion in the Navy, applying the above definitions, therefore refers solely to promotion to temporary appointment in the next higher grade.

There is a significant difference between temporary and permanent appointments in their importance to the individual officer:

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid.

> A permanent appointment may not be revoked, suspended or cancelled except by formal legal proceedings. A temporary appointment may be terminated by the President and an individual reverted to the grade of his permanent appointment . . . . An officer does not normally serve in a grade more than one higher than his permanent one.[1]

An example of this difference may be an aid to clarity: Assume an officer is serving in the grade of lieutenant under a permanent appointment to that grade. If he then is selected for promotion to lieutenant commander, he is issued a temporary appointment in this grade. While serving under this temporary appointment he may be reverted back to lieutenant by action of the President of the United States. (This action is normally taken only in cases of significant reductions in naval force).[2] However, once he has received his permanent appointment to lieutenant commander, formal legal proceedings are required if this appointment is to be involuntarily terminated.

Authorized size and distribution of ranks

The authorized maximum number of active duty line officers in the Regular Navy is equal to seven percent of the authorized strength of the Regular Navy in enlisted personnel.[3]

The permanent-grade distribution of line officers of the Regular Navy is also controlled by law. The maximum percentage, of the total number of such officers, that may be serving under

---

[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

[3] U. S., Code (Annotated), Title 10, Secs. 5501-8010, Armed Forces, Navy and Marine Corps (Brooklyn: Edward Thompson Co., 1959), Sec. 5403. Cited hereafter as USCA, Title 10.

permanent appointment in each grade, is as follows:[1]

Flag ranks (Admirals)	3/4%	Lieutenant	24 3/4%
Captain	6	Lieutenant (junior grade) and Ensign, combined	38 1/2%
Commander	12		
Lieutenant Commander	18		

Title 10 of the U. S. Code further regulates grade distribution by prescribing the maximum number of officers who may be serving in each of the ranks of lieutenant commander and above. These prescribed numbers are based on the authorized total number of line officers on active duty--Regular Navy and Naval Reserve, including both temporary and permanent appointees in each rank.[2]

Year groups. For purposes of promotion planning and a wide variety of other administrative practices, officers of the Navy are categorized into "year groups". Officers, generally speaking, are assigned to a year group based on the fiscal year in which first commissioned.

Promotion Planning

Promotion control elements

Three promotion control elements are utilized in planning for, and later execution of, naval officer promotions. These three elements are: (1) Distribution, (2) Flow Rate, and (3) Attrition. These control elements are closely interrelated variables--a change in one changes one, or both, of the others.[3] A discussion of each of these elements will illustrate their

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[1] Ibid., Sec. 5447. [2] Ibid., Sec. 5442.

[3] Officer Fact Book, Chap. 6, p. 6.

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use in promotion planning.

Distribution refers to the number of officers serving in each rank. The Secretary of the Navy prescribes the distribution of officers by grade, within the limits of law as noted above, to meet the needs of the Navy. At least once each year, the Secretary determines the number of officers serving in each of the various grades. Vacancies in each grade--both known and expected--are determined for the coming fiscal year. This, in turn, establishes the number of officers who may be promoted to fill such vacancies in each grade. With distribution established, flow rate and promotion attrition are determined to meet grade requirements and best assure equality of promotion opportunity for individuals in succeeding years.[1]

Flow rate is the planned rate at which an officer will progress through the various grades, providing he is successfully selected for promotion to each higher grade, throughout the course of his career.[2] This rate is

> . . . determined by the military requirement of experience coupled with the physical qualification demanded in each of the successive grades. There is the additional requirement of the individual for advancement to avoid stagnation. Stagnation would result in loss of incentive and determination.[3]

Table 1, below, sets forth the flow rates, in terms of years of service in grade and cumulative years of service, applicable to promotions in the Navy today. This table includes prescribed and recommended years of service specified by law, as

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[1]Ibid., pp. 6-7. [2]Ibid., p. 7.

[3]Ray C. Needham, Rear Admiral, U. S. Navy, "Officer Evaluation and Promotion," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 86, No. 3 (March, 1960), 64.

TABLE 1.--U. S. Navy Officer Promotion Flow Rates

Grade	Title 10, U. S. Code			U. S. Navy, Current	
	Min. yrs. in grade.[a]	Rec'd. yrs. in grade.[b]	Rec'd. total yrs. service.[c]	Years in grade.[d]	Total years service.[e]
ENS	(not specified for this rank).			1½	1½
LTJG	2	3	6	2½	4
LT	4	6	12	6	10
LCDR	4	6	13	5	15
CDR	5	7	25	6	21
CAPT	3	5	30	8	29

[a]Minimum years service in grade required to establish eligibility for promotion to next higher grade--USCA, Title 10, Sec. 5751.

[b]Years service in each grade recommended by law--USCA, Title 10, Sec. 5768.

[c]Total years service, prior to promotion to next higher grade, recommended by law--USCA, Title 10, Sec. 5768.

[d]Actual years service in each grade based on promotion flow rates in the Navy today--computed from "Total years service" column.

[e]Actual total years service, prior to promotion to next higher grade, characteristic of current Navy promotion practices--Officer Fact Book, Chap. 6, p. 180.

well as actual present flow rate data.

Two aspects of the information presented in Table 1 are particularly applicable to the problem under consideration in this paper. First, it can be noted that both in terms of years service in grade, and in total years service, the actual promotion flow rate in the Navy today is more rapid than that recommended by the Officer Personnel Act of 1947. Rear Admiral Ray C. Needham, while serving as Assistant Chief of Naval Personnel for Personnel Control in 1960, set forth the reason for these differences:

> The Chief of Naval Personnel believes that selection in the eighteenth year to commander and at 25 years to captain is too late to get effective officers in those grades. For that reason, a policy has been established that will provide for selection for temporary promotion to lieutenant commander in the tenth year, to commander in the sixteenth year, and to captain in the 21st year of commissioned service.[1]

The second important aspect of Table 1 is the minimum years-in-grade requirements established by law. The differences, between these minimum requirements and the current Navy flow rate years-in-grade, establish the opportunity for early promotion--" . . . the accelerated promotion of outstanding officers whose performance indicates them to be definitely among the best fitted of all the officers in the grade concerned."[2] The maximum promotion flow rate possible is a direct function of the minimum time-in-grade requirements prescribed by law. No officer may be considered for promotion to higher grades prior

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[1] Ibid., 67.

[2] Officer Fact Book, Chap. 6, p. 7.

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to completing this minimum service.[1] This second aspect--statutory limits on promotion rates--is especially significant to the problem under discussion and will be examined more fully in later chapters.

Attrition, the third control element applied in the promotion of naval officers, is defined as follows:

> . . . a separation of officers from the service as a result of death, legal action, or administrative action. Attrition is a variable--the resultant of these factors. It is not a true requirement, but functions to sustain the requirements of distribution and flow rate.[2]

Attrition is of two types: (1) natural, due to such factors as deaths, resignations and voluntary retirements and, (2) forced, due to involuntary separations or retirements resulting from failure of selection for promotion.[3] The necessity of applying forced attrition is explained as follows:

> Unless vacancies are created in higher grades, under the grade limitation features of the law, advancement to higher grades would be slowed to an unacceptable degree. There must be some form of attrition if the command pyramid and the concept of "up or out" is to be maintained.[4]

Attrition should, in the words of one author, be judiciously administered, since:

> Unnecessary attrition results in a waste of qualified manpower and a loss of security of the individual. Attrition rate should be the minimum consistent with established values for distribution and flow rate.[5]

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[1] USCA, Title 10, Sec. 5751.

[2] Needham, United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 86, No. 3, 64.

[3] Officer Fact Book, Chap. 6, p. 9. [4] Ibid.

[5] Needham, United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 86, No. 3, 64.

Forced attrition is computed and applied, to each year's promotions to the grades of lieutenant and above, to the extent necessary to insure maintenance of a normal promotion flow within the limits of grade distribution. To insure equal opportunity to officers in succeeding year groups, forced attrition is determined for each grade by a long range study which projects promotions over a five-year period. The resulting attrition percentage is then applied to the current year's promotion in determining the number of officers who must be placed in the promotion zone to be selected for vacancies for the next fiscal year. The number of officers placed in the promotion zone in excess of the number to be selected represents the minimum number that must be failed of selection to provide the percentage of forced attrition required by the long range studies.[1]

Promotion zones

U. S. Code, Title 10, requires the Secretary of the Navy to establish a promotion zone, specifying the senior and junior officers therein, as of the date of convening a selection board to consider officers of that grade for promotion.[2] The size and composition of this zone is as follows:

> The size of a promotion zone is a function of known and expected vacancies which will exist . . . in the next higher grade during the ensuing 12 months and the application of the forced attrition variable. . . . Consequently the promotion zone always consists of a number of those eligible

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[1] Officer Fact Book, Chap. 6, p. 9.

[2] USCA, Title 10, Sec. 5764.

officers most senior in the grade under consideration who have not previously been in a promotion zone to the next higher grade.[1]

Promotion eligibility

Officers eligible for consideration, by a selection board, for promotion to the next higher grade, are of three categories:

1) "Above the Zone"--eligible officers who have been previously considered for promotion from within a promotion zone and who were not recommended for promotion by prior selection boards.

2) "In the Zone"--as set forth above in the discussion of promotion zones.

3) "Below the Zone"--all eligible officers who have fulfilled the minimum service-in-grade requirements,[2] but who are not senior enough to be included within the promotion zone.[3]

"Early promotions" refer to those made from this below-the-zone category and represent the sole means, under the present promotion system, whereby outstanding officers are promoted at a more rapid rate than their contemporaries (who are not failed of selection).

The term "failed of selection" is applied, to those officers not recommended for promotion, as follows:

All officers in and above the promotion zone who are not recommended for promotion to the next higher grade by a

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[1]Officer Fact Book, Chap. 6, pp. 14-15.

[2]Above, Table 1.

[3]Officer Fact Book, Chap. 6, p. 15.

selection board are failed of selection. Those eligibles below the promotion zone who are not recommended are not failed of selection.[1]

Promotion Selection Boards

General

Selection boards for the promotion of naval officers are appointed and convened annually by the Secretary of the Navy. Separate boards are appointed for the promotion of officers to each of the grades of lieutenant through rear admiral.

> Except in the Medical and Dental Corps, no officer may be promoted above the rank of lieutenant (junior grade) without having been recommended for such promotion by a duly constituted and convened selection board. . . .[2]

Temporary promotion to the rank of lieutenant (junior grade) is currently made by administrative action upon completion of eighteen months satisfactory service as an ensign and determination of qualification for such promotion by the commanding officer concerned.[3]

Membership requirements

Naval officer selection boards are composed of nine members. Title 10, U. S. Code, specifies minimum grade requirements for membership on such boards. These minimum requirements are as follows:

1) For selection to the rank of captain--all board members must be serving in the grade of rear admiral or above.

2) For selection of lieutenant commanders to the rank of commander--three rear admirals and six captains.

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[1] *Ibid.* [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

3) For selections to the ranks of lieutenant commander and lieutenant--members must be in the grade of captain or above.[1]

An officer cannot serve as a member of two consecutive (annual) boards for the promotion of officers to the same grade.[2]

Selection Board Procedures

Statutory requirements

The Secretary of the Navy is required by law to furnish prescribed information to boards convened for the selection of officers for promotion. This includes the number, and names, of all officers eligible for consideration by the board.[3] The Secretary must also specify the number of officers the board is to select for promotion:

> This number, determined by the Secretary as of the date the board is convened, is equal to the number of vacancies existing among such officers in the higher grade, plus the number of additional vacancies estimated for the next 12 months, minus the number of officers on the [temporary] promotion list for that grade.[4]

Promotion criteria

Title 10, U. S. Code, sets forth the criteria to be used by selection boards in the following terms:

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[1] USCA, Title 10, Sec. 5701.

[2] Officer Fact Book, Chap. 6, p. 15.

[3] USCA, Title 10, Sec. 5706.

[4] Ibid., Sec. 5756.

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> Of the officers considered for promotion . . . , the board shall recommend for promotion, as appropriate . . .
> Those eligible male officers on the active list in the line of the Navy . . . whom the board considers best fitted for promotion;[1]

The meaning of "best fitted" is discussed later in this chapter.

Provision for "early selections"

The maximum percentage of those who may be selected from below the zone for early promotion, thus rewarding the performance of outstanding officers junior to the zone, is stated in law as follows:

> From among those eligible officers . . . who are junior in lineal rank to the junior officer in the appropriate promotion zone in any grade below that of captain in the Navy . . . , the board may recommend as best fitted for promotion a number of officers that does not exceed 5 percent of the total number of officers that the board is authorized to recommend for promotion to the grade concerned . . . .[2]

Since promotion to lieutenant (junior grade) is an administrative procedure, this 5 percent limit applies to early promotions to the grade of lieutenant through captain. There are no statutory limits on below-the-zone selections to flag ranks.

Votes required for selection

Promotion statutes also prescribe the minimum affirmative votes required for recommendation of an officer for promotion:

> No officer may be recommended for promotion . . . unless he receives the recommendation of at least two-thirds of the acting members of the board concerned.[3]

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[1] USCA, Title 10, Sec. 5707 (a).

[2] Ibid., Sec. 5707 (c).

[3] Ibid., Sec. 5707 (i).

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Board procedures

General

> No rules are prescribed on the detailed procedures to be followed by a selection board in the selection process. Deliberations cannot be revealed and members are sworn to secrecy. Therefore, it is never possible to give concrete reasons why an individual was selected or not selected.[1]

Although records of procedures and deliberations of a particular board are not available due to the above secrecy requirements, naval officers who have had selection board experience have written articles concerning the proceedings of a "typical" selection board. Some of these articles are used in the discussion which follows.

When the board first meets in Washington, the Chief of Naval Personnel and members of his staff make a series of presentations to the board. These briefings are oriented to the present and future needs of the Navy and provide broad guidelines for the board to follow in the selection process. Following this, the board is formally convened--members and recorders are placed on their oath to perform their duties to the best of their ability. The precept--a letter to the president of the board from the Secretary of the Navy--is then read. The precept sets forth in precise terms:

> . . . Which officers are in the promotion zone; it indicates the number of eligible officers whom the board may look at above the zone; and it further specifies the [maximum] number of people who can be selected for "head and shoulders" early selection.[2]

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[1] Officer Fact Book, Chap. 6, p. 15.

[2] Fitzhugh Lee, Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy, "Selection for Promotion," The Officer Personnel Newsletter, Vol. 10, No. 1 (July, 1965), 16; reprinted from the March, 1963 issue of the same quarterly periodical.

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Following the above preliminaries, the board then decides what specific criteria to use in determining " . . . those officers who are 'best fitted'--who have the greatest future potential--for service in the next grade."[1] Each selection board is essentially a free agent to conduct its affairs as it sees fit regarding:

1) The methods by which the board will arrive at its decisions,

2) The weights which it will give to the factors in the officers' records it reviews, and

3) The manner of voting.[2]

Determination of "best fitted"

Based on extensive readings which discuss "best fitted", the following definition of this overall criterion for promotion may be formulated: " 'Best fitted' describes those officers who demonstrate the greatest potential for meeting the present and future needs of the service in the next higher grade."

The determination of best fitted for promotion is based primarily on performance in past and present positions, and demonstrated potential, as indicated on an officer's fitness reports (written performance reports) received throughout his career. Many other factors, such as education and receipt of medals and decorations, also enter into the evaluation process,

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Worth Scanland, Captain, U. S. Navy, "Standby . . . Vote," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 89, No. 6 (June, 1963), 42.

however, evaluated performance and potential are the dominant factors.[1]

Evaluation of records

To facilitate the evaluation of officers for selection, brief sheets are prepared on each eligible candidate. These briefs, a few pages in length, summarize the officer's entire career including marks received on selected items of his fitness reports. The evaluation of these briefs, particularly the fitness report marks, play a key role in the selection process.[2] In evaluating past performance, the fitness report marks are tempered with the following factors:

1) Position held when marks were received--responsibility of position relative to rank held at the time.

2) Employment of command--at sea, ashore, in drydock, and the like.

3) Agreement between sections--comparison of marks in "forced-choice" boxes with narrative description of performance.

4) Allowance for known high, or low, graders among those who have submitted the reports.[3]

Voting

As noted earlier, in order to be recommended for promotion, an officer must receive the affirmative vote of six

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[1]Lee, The Officer Personnel Newsletter, Vol. 10, No. 1, 16-17.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Jack E. Magee, LT, U. S. Navy, "For Those Facing Selection," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 84, No. 11 (November, 1958), 73-74.

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(two-thirds) of the board members. Details of typical voting procedures are not within the scope of this paper, however, the following two excerpts from articles concerning "typical" board procedures are concerned appropriate:

> A typical procedure is to first examine the records of officers who are in the zone for promotion (first time up for selection), then go to those above the zone (passed over once or more), and finally to consider those below the zone to identify the small number of "head and shoulders" men who can be selected for accelerated promotion.[1]

And secondly: After selecting the allowed percentage in and above the zone,

> Then comes the task of selecting, if warranted, some officers from below the zone whose records show them to be so superior and of such potential that accelerated promotion is in the best interests of the Navy.
>
> From the 1,000 records of those below the zone who are eligible, a count is made of those who received a unanimous vote of the board.[2]

Those quotations are set forth to illustrate the stringent requirements for early selection as established by two "typical" selection boards. To what extent these examples are indicative of general Navy promotion practices will be examined in Chapter III.

Actions Based on Selection Board Results

Officers twice "failed of selection"

Regular Navy officers serving under permanent appointments in the ranks of lieutenant (junior grade) and lieutenant

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[1] Lee, The Officer Personnel Newsletter, Vol. 10, No. 1, 17.

[2] Scanland, United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 89, No. 6, 46.

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who are twice failed of selection to the next higher grade are honorably discharged from the Navy, with lump sum severance pay, on the last day of the fiscal year in which the second failure occurs.[1]

Lieutenant commanders, commanders and captains who are twice failed of selection continue to serve in grade and remain eligible for promotion consideration by subsequent selection boards. If not promoted, such officers are involuntarily retired upon completion of 20 years service in the case of lieutenant commanders; 26 years for commanders; and 30 years for captains.[2] In recent years, commanders and captains have been subject to earlier involuntary retirement under the provisions of PL 86-155, commonly known as the "Hump Bill". In these cases, commanders are retired upon completion of 20 years service if twice failed of selection and not selected for continuation on active duty; captains are retired after five years in grade and non-selection for continuation.[3]

Officers selected for promotion

Upon completion of its deliberations, the selection board prepares a list of the officers it has found best fitted for promotion to the next higher grade. The principal actions involved, between submission of the selection board's report and temporary promotion of the officers concerned, are as follows:

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[1] Officer Fact Book, Chap. 6, pp. 17-18.

[2] USCA, Title 10, Secs. 6376, 6379-6380.

[3] Officer Fact Book, Chap. 6, p. 18.

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1) Nominations are sent, via the Chief of Naval Personnel, Chief of Naval Operations, Secretary of the Navy and Secretary of Defense, to the President for approval.

2) Nominations are sent to the Senate for confirmation.

3) Selected officers are placed on the promotion list, for the appropriate grade, in the same order as their seniority in present grade.

4) Upon existence of a vacancy in the temporary grade structure of the rank concerned, a temporary appointment, signed by the Secretary of the Navy, is sent to the senior officer on the promotion list. The date of the vacancy determines the date of rank of the temporary appointment.

5) Providing the officer accepts the promotion and has previously met prescribed qualifications, he is temporarily appointed to the next higher grade effective on the specified date of rank.[1]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

General

Tables 2 through 5, below, show statistics for promotions to the ranks of lieutenant through captain, for fiscal years 1957 through 1966. These data are limited to unrestricted line officers of the Regular Navy with a classification designation number of 1100 or 1310. To facilitate analysis, data for each rank are tabulated for each annual selection board, subtotaled by designation numbers, and subsequently totaled. The tables contain statistics for each of the three promotion eligibility categories. Only the total numbers of selectees are tabulated for above-the-zone and below-the-zone categories, since the numbers of officers eligible for promotion in these categories is not considered germane to this discussion. Data relative to officers in the promotion zone include the number eligible and the number, and percentage, of these officers selected. The percentage of in-zone selections is considered pertinent for purposes of comparison with the percentage of selections which were made from below the zone.

The following explanations and limitations, relative to the interpretation of the tabulated data, are applicable:

1) Both the number, and percentage, of annual promotions

to a given rank may vary greatly over a period of years. These variations are due to a number of factors which are beyond the scope of this paper to examine; however, this fact should be kept in mind when ten-year averages of the various data are presented in the discussion below.

2) The promotions to a given rank, in a particular year, for 1100 and 1310 officers result from the recommendations of a single promotion board. The promotions are separated, by classification designation number, only as an aid to analysis.

3) The data relative to the promotion of aviators prior to 1963 include a small percentage of aviation line officers with designation numbers other than 1310. Separate data for 1310 officers for fiscal years 1957 through 1962 were not readily available. This factor is considered to have negligible effect on the problem under discussion.

4) In a few cases it may be noted that below-the-zone promotions exceed five-percent (the statutory limit) for annual promotions in a particular classification designation. The same selection boards, which consider 1100 and 1310 officers for promotion, also consider Naval Reserve officers on active duty and several other classifications of Regular Navy officers. The five-percent limit applies to the total number of selections made by a particular board, thus early promotions for one or more specific groups (by designation number) may exceed five percent providing that the total does not exceed this statutory limit.

TABLE 2.--Promotion of Unrestricted Line Officers of the Regular Navy to the Rank of Lieutenant, Fiscal Years 1957-1966.

Class. Des. No. Fiscal Year	No. Above Zone Sel. (1)	In Promotion Zone No. Elig. (2)	No. Sel. (3)	Pct. Sel. (4)	No. Below Zone Sel. (5)	Total No. Sel. (6)	Below Zone Pct. of Tot. Sel. (7)
1100							
1957	7	626	607	97.0	1	615	0.2
58	9	520	515	99.0	1	525	0.2
59	1	576	549	95.3	0	550	0.0
60	8	642	609	94.9	0	617	0.0
61	14	752	713	94.8	1	728	0.1
62	20	774	731	94.4	1	752	0.1
63	12	826	784	94.9	9	805	1.1
64	12	866	842	97.2	0	854	0.0
65	2	1142	1079	94.5	2	1083	0.2
66	13	1390	1314	94.5	0	1327	0.0
Sub-tot.	98	8114	7743	95.3	15	7856	0.2
1310							
1957	3	453	451	99.6	1	455	0.2
58	3	584	581	99.5	2	586	0.3
59	1	581	579	99.7	0	580	0.0
60	1	532	524	98.5	0	525	0.0
61	7	557	556	99.8	1	564	0.2
62	1	627	621	99.0	1	623	0.2
63	5	356	353	99.2	0	358	0.0
64	2	329	326	99.1	0	328	0.0
65	1	299	293	98.0	0	294	0.0
66	2	366	361	98.6	0	363	0.0
Sub-tot.	26	4684	4645	99.2	5	4676	0.1
Totals	124	12,798	12,388	96.8	20	12,532	0.2

Notes:

1. Abbreviations used: Class. Des. No.--Classification Designation Number; Sel.--Selected; Elig.--Eligible; Pct.--Percentage.
2. Column (6) is a total of columns (1), (3) and (5).
3. Sources: Columns (1) through (6)--Bureau of Naval Personnel files. Column (7), sub-totals and totals--computed by author.

TABLE 3.--Promotion of Unrestricted Line Officers of the Regular Navy to the Rank of Lieutenant Commander, Fiscal Years 1957-1966

Class. Des. No. Fiscal Year	No. Above Zone Sel. (1)	In Promotion Zone No. Elig. (2)	In Promotion Zone No. Sel. (3)	In Promotion Zone Pct. Sel. (4)	No. Below Zone Sel. (5)	Total No. Sel. (6)	Below Zone Pct. of Tot. Sel. (7)
1100							
1957	3	572	506	88.5	19	528	3.6
58	7	804	649	80.7	0	656	0.0
59	28	354	293	82.8	0	321	0.0
60	32	287	235	81.9	0	267	0.0
61	34	391	365	93.4	16	415	3.9
62	3	441	422	95.7	25	450	5.6
63	5	689	634	92.0	11	650	1.7
64	12	447	380	85.0	33	425	7.8
65	27	416	376	90.4	12	415	2.9
66	3	1178	1037	88.0	10	1050	1.0
Sub-tot.	154	5579	4897	87.8	126	5177	2.4
1310							
1957	8	474	438	92.4	9	455	2.0
58	7	864	729	84.4	0	736	0.0
59	34	675	548	81.2	0	582	0.0
60	82	541	498	92.0	0	580	0.0
61	34	357	352	98.6	10	396	2.5
62	1	414	403	97.3	17	421	4.0
63	0	936	897	95.8	6	903	0.7
64	8	738	677	91.7	24	709	3.4
65	19	625	597	95.5	14	630	2.2
66	9	902	867	96.1	6	882	0.7
Sub-tot.	202	6526	6006	92.0	86	6294	1.4
Totals	356	12,105	10,903	90.0	212	11,471	1.8

Notes:

1. Abbreviations used: Class. Des. No.--Classification Designation Number; Sel.--Selected; Elig.--Eligible; Pct.--Percentage.
2. Column (6) is a total of columns (1), (3) and (5).
3. Sources: Columns (1) through (6)--Bureau of Naval Personnel files. Column (7), sub-totals and totals--computed by author.

TABLE 4.--Promotion of Unrestricted Line Officers of the Regular Navy to the Rank of Commander, Fiscal Years 1957-1966

Class. Des. No. Fiscal Year	No. Above Zone Sel. (1)	In Promotion Zone No. Elig. (2)	In Promotion Zone No. Sel. (3)	In Promotion Zone Pct. Sel. (4)	No. Below Zone Sel. (5)	Total No. Sel. (6)	Below Zone Pct. of Tot. Sel. (7)
1100							
1957	11	63	51	81.0	6	68	8.8
58	9	273	233	85.3	0	242	0.0
59	1	317	180	56.8	4	185	2.2
60	20	404	232	57.4	3	255	1.2
61	15	434	277	63.8	2	294	0.7
62	39	368	263	71.5	5	307	1.6
63	18	390	260	66.7	4	282	1.4
64	12	302	228	75.5	3	243	1.2
65	24	271	184	67.9	7	215	3.3
66	4	607	457	75.2	5	466	1.1
Sub-tot.	153	3429	2365	69.1	39	2557	1.5
1310							
1957	28	177	141	79.7	6	175	3.4
58	20	415	329	79.3	0	349	0.0
59	1	685	305	44.5	4	310	1.3
60	34	616	307	49.8	2	343	0.6
61	34	482	284	58.9	3	321	0.9
62	56	413	273	66.1	3	332	0.9
63	25	361	247	68.4	4	276	1.4
64	13	576	412	71.5	2	427	0.5
65	37	593	418	70.5	5	460	1.1
66	22	584	414	71.0	5	441	1.1
Sub-tot.	270	4902	3130	63.9	34	3434	1.0
Totals	423	8331	5495	66.0	73	5991	1.2

Notes:

1. Abbreviations used: Class. Des. No.--Classification Designation Number; Sel.--Selected; Elig.--Eligible; Pct.--Percentage.
2. Column (6) is a total of columns (1), (3) and (5).
3. Sources: Columns (1) through (6)--Bureau of Naval Personnel files. Column (7), sub-totals and totals--computed by author.

TABLE 5.--Promotion of Unrestricted Line Officers of the Regular Navy to the Rank of Captain, Fiscal Years 1957-1966

Class. Des. No. Fiscal Year	No. Above Zone Sel. (1)	In Promotion Zone No. Elig. (2)	In Promotion Zone No. Sel. (3)	In Promotion Zone Pct. Sel. (4)	No. Below Zone Sel. (5)	Total No. Sel. (6)	Below Zone Pct. of Tot. Sel. (7)
1100							
1957	7	140	87	62.1	8	102	7.8
58	3	186	103	55.4	6	112	5.4
59	4	331	154	46.5	2	160	1.2
60	35	286	122	42.7	5	162	3.1
61	13	261	130	49.8	4	147	2.7
62	20	218	116	53.2	1	137	0.7
63	29	144	65	45.1	9	103	8.7
64	14	228	112	49.1	4	130	3.1
65	18	347	167	48.1	3	188	1.6
66	8	272	126	46.3	6	140	4.3
Sub-tot.	151	2413	1182	49.2	48	1381	3.5
1310							
1957	3	149	104	69.8	5	112	4.5
58	3	84	56	66.7	5	64	7.8
59	3	376	164	43.6	2	169	1.2
60	22	358	100	27.9	3	125	2.4
61	22	372	112	30.1	2	136	1.5
62	13	389	112	28.8	3	128	2.3
63	46	432	102	23.6	5	153	3.3
64	25	350	116	33.1	4	145	2.8
65	23	526	195	37.1	2	220	0.9
66	20	345	119	34.6	3	142	2.1
Sub-tot.	180	3381	1180	34.9	34	1394	2.4
Totals	331	5794	2362	40.8	82	2775	3.0

Notes:

1. Abbreviations used: Class. Des. No.--Classification Designation Number; Sel.--Selected; Elig.--Eligible; Pct.--Percentage.
2. Column (6) is a total of columns (1), (3) and (5).
3. Sources: Columns (1) through (6)--Bureau of Naval Personnel files. Column (7), sub-totals and totals--computed by author.

The data from Tables 2 through 5 are discussed and analyzed below for the purpose of illustrating opportunity, or lack of opportunity, for early promotions in the Navy during the past ten years. Explanations which may account for specific early promotion rates will be noted in the discussion.

Promotion Opportunities

To the rank of lieutenant

Data for promotions to the rank of lieutenant are tabulated in Table 2. The most significant facts set forth by this table are: (1) the very high percentage of in-zone officers promoted and, (2) the very low percentage of below-the-zone (early) promotions.

The ten-year average of promotion opportunity for officers in the zone was 95.3 percent for 1100 officers (surface and submarine); and 99.2 percent for 1310 officers (aviators). Percentages for each of the years during this period did not vary significantly from these averages. The primary reason for these high promotion rates is apparently the severe shortage of officers in this rank. For example, the fiscal 1967 estimated Navy needs for unrestricted line lieutenants is 16,175, while the number on board as of November 30, 1965 was only 10,723. The shortage in this rank is greater--in number and in percentage--than for any other rank in the Navy.[1]

With such high in-zone promotion rates, one might expect that below the zone promotions would have been made in

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[1] Navy Times (East Edition), March 9, 1966, p. 2.

The data from Table 1 suggest a low elasticity and derived data for the number of [illegible] operations, as also of manufacturing for many commodities in the long during the post war years. Statistical data are insufficient for exactly what happened then, but it is clear in the literature.

Specific Commodities

To get back to industry

Data for comparison to the year of [illegible] are available in Table 2. The most significant facts are found in the light case. (1) [illegible] high [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] are, (2) the [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

The [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] for [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

significant numbers. However, combined 1100-1310 early promotions were only a token 0.2 percent of total promotions over the ten-year period. This negligible number of early promotions is explainable, especially for the past two years, on the basis of the minimum total service required before promotion to lieutenant can be effected--three and one-half years (18 months service as ensign plus two years statutory minimum time-in-grade as lieutenant, junior grade). The following, concerning promotions for fiscal year 1966, illustrates this point:

> The . . . male jaygees picked for promotion to lieutenant will make their numbers 3 1/2 years after their date of commissioning.
>
> This is about what occurred last March when there were vacancies for all, despite the earlier direction that the fiscal 1965 selectees make their numbers on their fourth anniversary.[1]

At the present time, therefore, promotion opportunity to lieutenant is very high due to a shortage of officers in this grade. Opportunity for early promotion to this grade is currently (FY 1966) non-existent since promotion of all selectees is being effected upon completion of the minimum term of service. Early promotion to this grade in less recent years meant a maximum of six-months acceleration in promotion, relative to contemporaries, since the normal Navy flow rate for promotion was four years, or just six months longer than the prescribed minimum.

For the present time at least, a meaningful discussion of early promotions must begin at the lieutenant commander level.

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[1] Ibid., December 8, 1965, p. 5.

To the rank of lieutenant commander

Promotion statistics relative to this rank are presented in Table 3. As one would expect with a pyramidal rank structure, promotion opportunity decreases with increasing levels of rank. The ten-year in-zone average for 1100 officers was 87.8 percent; for 1310 officers, 92.0. The maximum deviation of individual annual percentages from these averages was slightly over 10 percent. The overall 1100-1310 promotion rate for in-zone officers was 90.0 during this period. This small decrease in promotion opportunity, relative to that for lieutenants, was accompanied by a slight increase in the early promotion rate--2.4 percent for 1100 officers, 1.4 percent for 1310 officers, for an overall below-zone selection rate of 1.8 percent. The picture here changed but slightly from that of the next lower rank. Promotion opportunity was still high and early promotions remained few in number--about 20 per year average for 1100 and 1310 officers combined.

At this promotion point, there are approximately two years available in which early promotions may be made. This "slack" is due to the difference between normal Navy flow rate to this grade (ten years total service) and statutory limits (eight years, assuming the "normal" rate of four years to lieutenant plus the statutory minimum of four years service in that grade).

To the rank of commander

As shown in Table 4, the trend of decreasing promotion opportunity with increasing rank continues. This table shows the

ten-year average in-zone promotion opportunity to the rank of commander was 69.1 percent for surface and submarine officers, and 63.9 percent for aviators. Contrary to the previous ranks discussed, the individual annual averages vary considerably from the ten-year averages. The maximum deviation is nearly 20 percentage points (fiscal year 1959 for 1310 officers). The greater fluctuation here is chiefly due to the latter part of the World War II "hump" of officers passing through this rank during this ten-year period. The combined 1100-1310 in-zone promotion rate for this period was 66.0 percent, with a combined average early selection rate of 1.2 percent, slightly lower than it was for lieutenant commanders.

Assuming an officer is promoted to lieutenant commander at the present planned flow rate of 10 years total service, there is only one year available in which accelerated promotion to commander can be effected. This year represents the difference between the Navy desired flow rate of five years service in the grade of lieutenant commander, and the corresponding statutory minimum time-in-grade of four years.

To the rank of captain

Table 5 tabulates data relative to promotions to the rank of captain. Compared to the lower ranks discussed above, the promotion picture for this rank has been considerably different--much lower in-zone promotion rates accompanied by higher rates of early selection.

The in-zone rate for 1100 officers was 49.2 percent; for aviators, 34.9; with a combined ten-year rate of 40.8

percent. These relative low promotion rates further reflect the pyramidal characteristic of the Navy officer corps. Combined with this factor, low promotion rates (high attrition) have resulted from the World War II officer "hump" being considered for promotion to captain throughout most of this ten-year period.

The combined 1100-1310 early promotion rate for this grade was 3.0 percent, still a small percentage but a significant increase above the rates for lower grades. This increase in early promotion rate, despite the decrease in the promotion rates for officers in the zone, is partially explainable in terms of total years service on which evaluation for selection is based. For example, it seems reasonable to assume that more sound early selections can be made when based on the evaluation of approximately 20 years total service (selection to captain) than when only 10 years service (selection to lieutenant commander) are evaluated.

Present desired Navy flow rate to captain is based on six years service in grade as a commander. The corresponding statutory limit is five years minimum service in grade. This allows, as in the case of promotion to commander, an opportunity for a one-year acceleration in promotion.

Normal, Early, and Late Promotions

It may be argued that more outstanding officers are promoted faster than their less-qualified contemporaries when outstanding officers are promoted "when due" (in the zone for the first time), while some of the less-qualified are promoted after being failed of selection one or more times. This seems to

be a negative approach to the problem under discussion. However, the percentages of promotions from each category--late (above-zone), normal (in-zone), and early (below-zone)--will be briefly examined. Table 6 shows the number, and percent of total selections, of promotions made from each of these categories.

TABLE 6.--Promotion of Unrestricted Line Officers (1100 & 1310) of the Regular Navy by Zone Categories, Fiscal Years 1957-1966[a]

Promotion to Rank of:	Total No. Selected	Above Zone		In Zone		Below Zone	
		No.	Pct.[b]	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Lieutenant	12,532	124	1.0	12,388	98.8	20	0.2
Lt. Cdr.	11,471	356	3.1	10,903	95.1	212	1.8
Commander	5,991	423	7.1	5,495	91.8	73	1.2
Captain	2,775	331	11.9	2,362	85.0	82	3.0
Totals	32,769	1234	3.8	31,148	95.0	387	1.2

[a]Total numbers selected, and nos. by category, are taken from Tables 2 through 5.

[b]Pct. refers to the percentage of the total number selected. Pct.'s for the three categories may not total 100.0 percent due to rounding.

Reference to the above table illustrates that the overall readjustment of seniority as a result of late promotions has been relatively small--3.8 percent for total promotions of the past ten years. It is noted, however, that the percentage of late promotions increases with increase in rank--from 1.0 percent for lieutenants to a significant rate of 11.9 percent for captains. This increase is accompanied by a corresponding decrease in the

percentage of total promotions which are made from within promotion zones--98.8 percent for lieutenants decreasing to 85.0 for captains. This interrelationship is simply a function of mathematics--with the number of promotions fixed, any increase in promotions from one zone category must result in a decrease in one or both of the other categories.

Table 6 shows that a great percentage of all promotions have been made from within promotion zones, with a small percentage of above-zone promotions and an even smaller percentage of below-zone selections, thus providing little readjustment of seniority among all officers who are successfully promoted to any given rank.

Summary

The foregoing examination of the promotion of unrestricted line officers of the Regular Navy produces the following major points pertinent to early promotion opportunity:

1) Although a five percent rate of early selection is allowed under law, the early promotion rates for most grades have been far below this limit. Early promotion to the rank of captain, at an average rate of 3.0 percent, is the single exception to this.

2) Except in the case of promotions to captain, the combined effects of early and late promotions provided little readjustment of seniority among officers successfully selected, regardless of when selection occurred.

3) Perhaps the most significant result of an examination of the data in Tables 2 through 5 is a realization of the

autonomy of individual selection boards. As noted earlier in this paper, within the guidelines presented in preliminary briefings and the Secretary of the Navy's precept, a promotion board acts as a "free agent" in selection of the best-fitted. The data in the tables reenforce this stated feature of the Navy promotion system. As a result, it is difficult to note any trends or arrive at any generalizations, concerning promotions, based on the data in the tables. For example, even with the interdependence of the variables involved, it seems reasonable to assume that both above-, and below-zone promotions would be proportional to the in-zone promotion rates. That is, as a higher percentage of officers are promoted from within the zone, it is reasonable to believe that increasing numbers of above-, and below-zone officers would better fulfill the criterion of best-fitted compared to the least-qualified who are promoted from within the zone. This generalization, which assumes a normal distribution of talent within each year group, cannot be supported by the data. In fact, several cases of the reverse of this may be found.

4) One factor, not previously mentioned, is worthy of note at this point. The total number of individual officers who have realized at least one early promotion in the past ten years is less than the total of early selections to all grades--387, from Table 6--to the extent that some of these officers may have received more than one early promotion. For example, an exceptionally outstanding lieutenant selected early for promotion to lieutenant commander in 1957, could possibly have been

selected early, for commander in 1961, and again for captain in 1966. Information on such early-promotion "repeaters" was not readily available.

CHAPTER IV

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE NAVY PROMOTION SYSTEM

General

The relative lack of opportunity for officers to advance more rapidly than the strict framework of seniority allows has not gone unnoticed. Particularly in recent years, various administrative or statutory changes to the Navy promotion system have been proposed aimed at rectifying this deficiency. This problem area has been set forth by Rear Admiral C. K. Duncan, U. S. Navy, as follows:

> In no other phase of U. S. life is seniority so embedded as it is in the U. S. Navy. A seniority system is an absolute necessity in any military organization . . . . We need seniority, however, only among a group of individuals in a specific situation at a given time. The relative seniority between cruiser skippers in 1960 does not necessarily have to be that which was established in classrooms in 1935.
>
> The concept which many have that a class should march into the Naval Academy together in July, march out four years later in a seniority list determined in an undergraduate atmosphere, and then march out of the Navy in a body 30 years later in exactly the same precedence, goes counter to other experience with human nature.[1]

The above excerpt, of course, does not take into account officers who are failed of selection, or who are early selected, one or more times during the course of their naval careers.

Three proposed changes which might improve the opportunity

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[1]C. K. Duncan, Rear Admiral, U. S. Navy, "Comment and Discussion: U. S. Naval Seniority Practices," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 87, No. 2 (February, 1961), 104.

for early promotion will be briefly examined in this chapter. Potential benefits and shortcomings of each will be presented where applicable. These three proposed changes are:

1) Periodic realignment of lineal list seniority.

2) Implementation of certain changes recommended by the Bolte Committee.

3) Adoption of the distributed-zone promotion system developed by the Navy Retention Task Force.

Periodic Realignment of Lineal List Seniority

In 1961, the Chief of Naval Personnel proposed that a periodic realignment of seniority, within designated blocks or groups of officers, be conducted throughout the career span of naval officers. The concept behind such a realignment procedure is noted by one author as follows:

> It would seem that class or year-group, within a two-to-three-year span, is not a factor in determining competence after some six or seven years' service, although its use during the early years is logical and, in fact, inescapable . . . . This initial ranking should undergo review, however, no later than the time of promotion from lieutenant to lieutenant commander.[1]

This same author envisioned that a procedure for realignment of seniority would operate generally along the following lines:

> A system of periodic (at promotion eligibility points) revision of the precedence list in groups extending over about three classes [year groups] would avoid the rigidity of original seniority established by class or class standing . . . . There are several ways to rearrange seniority through the years . . . . Rearrangement of every individual's precedence in relation to every other's need not, and should not, be attempted. The precedence of the

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[1] Ibid., 104-105.

majority, relative to one another, would probably not be changed, but the precedence of the best and poorest performers would be changed. Seniority change would be permissive on the part of the Board rather than compulsory.[1]

Potential benefits of realignment

The potential benefits of seniority realignment have been set forth by one naval officer as follows:

1) Provides for better performers to gravitate upwards.

2) Gives the individual officer a periodic check on the evaluation of his performance relative to his contemporaries.

3) Provides performance incentive to a wider range of officers than does early selection.

4) Acts as an aid in detailing officers to "pre-selection" billets. (Selection for certain career-enhancing jobs, both Navy-wide and within individual organizations, is often based on seniority).[2]

Realignment of lineal list seniority should produce the above-listed benefits, however, its effect on the actual promotion rate of more outstanding officers would depend on the extent to which realignment accelerated the entrance of such officers into later promotion zones. If conducted in increments of over one year group, such acceleration would be achieved.

Difficulty of realignment

The primary difficulty in conducting an objective

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[1]Ibid., 105.

[2]S. Turner, LCDR, U. S. Navy, "Comment and Discussion," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 86, No. 6 (June, 1960), 112-113.

realignment of seniority, which would enjoy the confidence of officers whose careers are affected by such a procedure, lies in weaknesses inherent in a basic element of the entire naval promotion system--fitness reports. Since shortcomings of the fitness reports system are applicable to later discussion also, a brief examination of this system will be presented at this point.

The most prevalent criticisms of fitness reports are that overall grading is generally too high and that there is such a degree of uniformity among reports that evaluation of actual performance is difficult. A few comments, made by senior naval officers, illustrate this point:

> Too many officers are being marked straight down the line as "outstanding," "one of the highly outstanding officers I know" and "1 out of a 100" with general and superlative comments.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> If you mark two or more competing officers as "one of highly outstanding," you should indicate which is your best performer and, insofar as possible, the relative standing of the others.[1]
>
> When the marks were analyzed over a period of time, too many officers were rated outstanding.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Given 100 fitness report jackets, one could readily select the top ten and the bottom ten; but it would be difficult to select the ten ranking from 45 to 55 inclusive.[2]
>
> So many records are so similar in so many respects that, from a list of 100 officers of which only 40 can be selected, it is easy to pick the top 30 and the bottom 30 officers.

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[1] B. J. Semmes, Jr., Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy, Chief of Naval Personnel, "From the Chief of Naval Personnel," The Officer Personnel Newsletter, Vol. 10, No. 3 (January, 1966), p. 1.

[2] Ray C. Needham, Rear Admiral, U. S. Navy, "Officer Evaluation and Promotion," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 86, No. 3 (March, 1960), 61-62.

> But to get the 10 remaining selectees from the 40 officers left in the middle is most difficult.[1]

A comment written in 1934 by Admiral Sims illustrates that this problem is not unique to the present-day Navy:

> This impossibility of determining the relative fitness of officers is due to the well-known fact that reports of fitness are practically uniform, and are generally much too favorable.[2]

From the above comments, one may deduce that realignment of a particular year group is possible to the extent that the top 10-30 percent could be advanced on the seniority list and another 10-30 percent realigned to the lower end of the list. As the block, in which realignment is to be effected, spans greater periods of time (more year groups) the task becomes increasingly difficult and complex. Whether realignment of seniority, especially in blocks of over one year group, could be administered so as to enjoy the confidence of those whose careers it affects, appears highly questionable in view of the shortcomings of the fitness report system of evaluation.

Despite the weaknesses of fitness reports, there appears to be no mechanism presently available that would better serve as a basis for performance evaluation, particularly when one considers the size of the naval organization. A non-military writer has noted the importance of such reports, in large

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[1]Fitzhugh Lee, Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy, "Selection for Promotion," The Officer Personnel Newsletter, Vol. 10, No. 1 (July, 1965), 17. Reprinted from the March, 1963 issue of the same quarterly periodical.

[2]William S. Sims, Admiral, U. S. Navy (Retired), "Promotion by Selection," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 60, No. 6 (June, 1934), 770.

organizations, as follows:

> Despite dissatisfaction with present forms, some type of written record of performance is indispensable in any large organization; the larger, the more indispensable. It need not be a numerical rating scheme, but it must be periodic, written, and indicative of actual performance, so far as possible on a uniform and comparable basis.[1]

Some improvement in the spread of marks has been achieved by changes in the fitness report form used--five variations in the form were made between 1943 and 1954.[2] However, the fitness reports continue to be graded too uniformly, and generally too high, as noted previously.

Recommendations of the Bolte Committee

In 1960, the Bolte Committee, established by the Secretary of Defense, submitted its report on recommended changes to the Officer Personnel Act of 1947 (amended). Enactment of the recommendations of this committee would provide for a common promotion system for all of the armed services. If one accepts the old adage: "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery," these recommendations speak well of the Navy promotion system. The Bolte proposals recommend, basically, the adoption of the present Navy system for all the armed forces, with a few minor modifications.[3] Two recommended modifications which could affect

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[1]Leonard D. White, Introduction to the Study of Personnel Administration (3d ed.; New York: The MacMillan Co., 1950), p. 408.

[2]Needham, United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 86, No. 3, 61.

[3]Interview with an official in the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Washington, D. C., February 11, 1966.

early promotions in the Navy are briefly discussed and analyzed below.

One recommendation of the Bolte report is to increase the present statutory limit on the percentage of promotions which may be made from below the zone. As noted earlier, the present limit is 5 percent of the total promotions (to any rank) that the board is allowed to recommend. The Bolte recommendation would change this maximum percentage as follows: maintain the present 5 percent limit for promotions to lieutenant commander and increase the allowed percentage to 7 1/2 percent for promotions to commander, and to 10 percent for captain.[1]

As noted in Chapter III, in recent years the Navy has not even approached utilization of the presently allowed 5 percent early selection rate. This being the case, it is difficult to visualize this change, by itself, having any significant effect on early promotions.

A second Bolte recommendation involves changes in statutory minimum time-in-grade requirements. Table 7, below, sets forth the current statutory limits and the limits recommended by the Bolte Committee.

As can be seen from this table, this recommendation would reduce the time required in the grades of lieutenant and commander by one year each. The only effect this would have on

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[1]U. S., Department of Defense, "A Bill: To Amend Title 10, U. S. Code, relating to the appointment, promotion, separation, and retirement of members of the armed forces, and for other purposes" (as presented to the Senate and House Armed Services Committees), pp. 30-31. Hereafter referred to as the Bolte Bill.

early promotions is to allow "deeper" below-the-zone promotions to the ranks of lieutenant commander and captain by one year each. It seems highly questionable that this would have a significant effect on early promotions in the Navy at the present time.

TABLE 7.--Minimum Time-In-Grade Requirements for the Promotion of U. S. Naval Officers

Grade	Minimums under USCA, Title 10[a]	Recommended by Bolte[b]
Lieutenant (junior grade)	2	2
Lieutenant	4	3
Lieutenant Commander	4	4
Commander	5	4
Captain	3	3

Sources:

[a]USCA, Title 10, Sec. 5751.

[b]Bolte Bill, pp. 36-37.

Early this year (January-February, 1966) it appeared probable that a "Baby Bolte" bill--less complex and bulky than the original form--might finally come before Congress.[1] Most recent indications are, however, that only a few "urgent" recommendations, none related to early promotions, have a chance of becoming law this year.[2]

[1]Navy Times (East Edition), January 26, 1966, p. 1; and February 16, 1966, p. 1.

[2]Navy Times (East Edition), March 30, 1966, p. 3.

The "Distributed Zone Promotion Plan"

In the fall of 1965, the "Navy Retention Task Force", headed by Rear Admiral John M. Alford, completed an extensive eighteen months study of enlisted and officer personnel problems in the Navy. One aspect of this study was a thorough examination and evaluation of the officer promotion system. As a result of this evaluation, a revolutionary promotion system entitled the "distributed zone promotion plan" was recommended, on a "for-further-study" basis, by the Task Force.[1]

The distributed zone system aims directly at solving the problem of early selection of outstanding officers. Although the fate of this recommendation is a matter of conjecture, a brief discussion of the philosophy upon which it is based, and its potential benefits and drawbacks, is considered pertinent to the subject of this paper.

Basis for system

The Alford Task Force based its recommendation for the distributed zone concept on the following interrelated assumptions: (1) "Officers do not mature professionally at the same rate even when given identical experience and educational opportunity,"[2] and, (2) " . . . officers mature and become ready for promotion at a normal (bell curve) rate."[3]

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[1]Interview with a member of the Navy Retention Task Force, Washington, D. C., February 14, 1966.

[2]U. S., Department of the Navy, Report of the Navy Retention Task Force, pre-publication draft of "Promotion Planning in the U. S. Navy," February, 1966, p. 7.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 12.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

In addition to the above, the Task Force felt that the present promotion system essentially recognizes only two degrees of ability and performance--by selection, or non-selection, at promotion points. The historical 2 percent average early selection rate was noted by the board, but was felt to be a negligible exception, leaving 98 percent of all naval officers with the knowledge " . . . that little or nothing they can do will change the time at which they will be considered for promotion."[1]

Description of system

The distributed zone promotion system involves the placement of three or four year groups in a promotion zone at one time, rather than a single year group under the present system.[2] The operation of the system is perhaps best described by an example. Assume a hypothetical year group of 1000 officers, and that long-range promotion plans dictate an overall 75 percent selection rate (25 percent overall attrition rate). The first year this year group is in the zone (determined by statutory minimum time-in-grade), 7.5 percent or 75 officers would be selected. The second year in the zone, 22.5 percent, or 225, would be promoted. The third year in the zone would

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[1] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[2] This basic element in the "distributed zone promotion plan" is not a new idea. The origin, as far as the author knows, is the following: R. G. Alexander, LCDR, USN and W. L. Read, LT, USN, "Let's Get Rid of the Conveyor Belt!" United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 83, No. 9 (September, 1957), 938-943.

result in 37.5 percent, or 375, of the original 1000 being selected. Assuming a four year-group zone, the fourth year would produce 7.5 percent, or 75, promotions. The overall result would be 750 promotions--or 75 percent of the beginning 1000-officer year group--distributed over four years in the next higher grade. The 250 officers who failed of selection in all of the four years their group was in the zone would be separated from the service.[1] Discussion of the details, and relative merit, of such separation is beyond the scope of this paper to present. (Numbers and percentages used in the above example are illustrative only and do not represent any specific promotion plan developed by the Task Force).

The overall benefit to be realized from the distributed zone system is that it takes into account variations in individual professional development by recognizing five different gradations of ability and performance--the four speeds of promotion and the ultimate passover.[2] Its proponents feel that this characteristic would both increase the incentive of present officers, and attract more high-quality young officers to a career in the Navy.

Drawbacks of system

As might be expected of any proposed change of such magnitude, the distributed zone system is not without drawbacks nor objections. One drawback, apparent to its sponsors,

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[1] Navy Times (East Edition), February 2, 1966, p. 3.

[2] Ibid.

[illegible]

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" . . . is the difficulty of phasing it in so as to avoid injury by changing the rules in the middle of the game for officers already in service."[1]

Strongest objections to date have come from the United States Marine Corps. These objections are based primarily on the Marine Corps' use of a somewhat similar process in dealing with the promotion of a large number of World War II majors in the years 1960 through 1964. The Marine Corps objects to the distributed zone concept on the basis that it would:

1. Reshuffle the lineal list from time to time and cause confusion;
2. Upset morale and confidence by promoting substantial numbers of juniors over their seniors;
3. Weaken the principles of best-fitted selection.[2]

This third objection appears directed at the fact that, in order for the distributed zone concept to operate properly, selection boards would be directed to promote a certain percentage from each group in the zone each year. A fourth objection of the Marine Corps is that " . . . their experience showed that an officer leap-frogged by his juniors would regard himself as passed over, would feel passed over, no matter what you called it."[3]

Summary

Three possible means of providing for higher rates of early promotion have been examined in this chapter. Potential

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[1] Navy Times (East Edition), February 16, 1966, p. 5.

[2] Navy Times (East Edition), February 23, 1966, p. 4.

[3] Ibid.

benefits and drawbacks of the three proposals have been cited from various sources. In the final chapter which follows, the author will present his own comments on these recommended changes.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Resume of Preceding Chapters

The intention of the author in the preceding chapters has been to highlight the following points:

1) Chapter I set forth the role of promotions in any organization and the importance of promotion to the individual--especially a military officer.

2) Chapter II presented the statutory and administrative framework in which the promotion of naval officers is effected. Points from this chapter which are germane to the problem area include: the five percent statutory limit on early promotions to all grades below flag rank and some evidence of the stringent requirements, applied by promotion boards, in selecting officers from below the zone.

3) Data pertaining to the promotion of unrestricted line officers for fiscal years 1957 through 1966 were presented in Chapter III. Pertinent products of this chapter were the high in-zone promotion rates for lieutenants and lieutenant commanders and the low rates of early promotions to all ranks, with the possible exception of the 3 percent rate to captain.

4) Three changes recommended in recent years which are aimed at improving the early selection rate for more outstanding officers, were examined in Chapter IV. Potential benefits and

drawbacks/difficulties associated with each proposal were briefly noted. More will be said regarding these in the discussion below.

Promotion as a Retention Factor

Practically nothing has been presented up to this point regarding the direct relationship of the present naval promotion system and the retention of talented, ambitious junior officers who face a choice of whether or not to make a career of the naval service. It is highly questionable whether one could establish a quantitative relationship such as: "if early promotion rates were increased 'X' percent, 'Y' (numbers of) additional outstanding young officers would become careerists." It is recognized that promotion opportunity (early, as well as general) is overshadowed, as a retention factor, by at least one other aspect of a naval career--general acceptance of the unrestricted line officer's way of life, including frequent and prolonged deployments from home port or station.

On the other hand, the extent to which a promotion system recognizes and rewards superior performance may be the deciding career-selection factor for many highly-talented young men. It seems reasonable to assume that the importance of this factor, to the individual, would be roughly proportional to his ambition and ability. From this it would follow that the more a given career provides for differential rates of promotion, relative to individual performance and potential, the higher the caliber of the individuals to whom such a career would prove attractive.

It is imprudent to speak of retention without specifying, to some extent, the quality of personnel to which retention efforts are to be directed. As the data for promotions over the past ten years indicate, less than two percent of all promotions were made from below-the-zone categories. This represents the total extent to which the naval promotion system has rewarded outstanding performance (excluding the "negative rewards" of failure of selection, with or without later promotions). This very low rate of early selection serves as a very minimal indication that top performance is recognized and rewarded. This being the case, it is highly doubtful if the Navy is attractive, career-wise, to those individuals who place a premium on the use of relative performance in determining rate of advancement.

An examination of in-zone promotion opportunity may shed light on another retention aspect of the present Navy promotion system. The ten-year average selection rate for officers in the zone for promotion to lieutenant has been 96.8 percent. Similar data for lieutenant commander selections was 90.0 percent. With promotion to lieutenant nearly a "sure thing" and subsequent promotion to lieutenant commander (including a twenty-year retirement "guarantee") highly probable, it is rational to assume that the present system may prove very attractive to many young officers who, for the good of the service, should be encouraged to seek their careers elsewhere.

The combination of low early promotion rates and high in-zone selection rates therefore fails to retain officers of the caliber desired, and may, conversely, tend to retain below-average performers in significant numbers.

Based on the author's personal limited experience of 13 years as a naval officer, it is highly probable that a young officer, at the career-selection point in his life, may never have had personal contact with an officer who was among the very few promoted early. It is more likely that his entire concept of the promotion system has been formulated by observing the nearly-simultaneous promotion of groups of officers who vary greatly in relative performance and ability. Based on such observations, it is doubtful that the present promotion system is evaluated very highly regarding its reward-of-performance aspects.

Reasons for Low Rates of Early Promotion

Discussion of weaknesses in any system is incomplete without attempting to determine "why?"--that is, to examine possible reasons behind the deficiencies. In this case there are at least two principal reasons for low early promotion rates.

The first of these has to do with overall morale of the officer corps. This requires that the promotion system enjoy the confidence of those whose careers are affected by it. Any actions, such as early promotions, which tend to favor a few, must be firmly based on merit to avoid deterioration of this confidence. The author feels the below excerpt well-describes the general feeling of naval officers regarding the present promotion system:

> . . . the system does . . . deserve respect. Rarely do the names of those selected or those passed over create any real amazement among those who know the individuals involved. Even in the case of early selection, contemporaries of the

> early selectees seldom disagree with the boards' choices . . . .[1]

There has probably been a hesitancy on the part of selection boards to select extensively from below the zone for fear of shaking this general confidence of officers in the system.

One point may require clarification at this time. The argument of this paper is not directed at the question of whether or not those selected from within the zone, or those early-selected, are the "best-fitted" of the officers in their respective zone categories. The theme of this paper is aimed at the probability that a greater percentage of officers from below the zone better meet the best-fitted criterion relative to some of those selected from within the zone.

The second possible reason for limited early selections may stem from a general promotion philosophy based on problems connected with the promotion of World War II "hump" year groups. Attrition, especially in promotions to the ranks of commander and captain, has been "brutal" in many of the years following World War II. The results of this are two-fold: (1) with low in-zone promotion opporunity, there is a greater probability of persons in the zone better fulfilling the best-fitted criterion and, (2) with the corresponding high attrition rates, it is perhaps normal for the board to be hesitant in selecting from below-the-zone, thereby further increasing in-zone attrition. The lower early selection rate to the rank of commander (1.2 percent),

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[1] A. N. Glennon, LCDR, U. S. Navy, "Comment and Discussion," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 89, No. 10 (October, 1963), 121.

compared to that for lieutenant commander, (1.8 percent), is most likely an effect of such high attrition. The 3.0 percent rate of early selection to captain is probably a result of the factor of high attrition being partially overcome by a second factor--increased years of experience, providing a sounder evaluation basis for early promotions, as discussed earlier.

Evaluation of Proposed Remedies

The proposals of the Bolte Committee--increasing the statutory maximum early selection rate for some ranks and decreasing the minimum time-in-grade requirements for others--would have negligible effect on early promotions. Current promotion practices do not utilize presently allowed early promotion rates, so it is futile to expect an increase in statutory allowances, alone, to have any effect. Coupled with a change in the overall philosophy regarding early promotions, however, enactment of the Bolte proposals could act to increase accelerated promotions.

Realignment of lineal list seniority, in itself, appears to be of questionable value in accelerating promotions. If realignment is conducted in blocks of a single year group, increased promotion rate can be realized only to the extent that such realignment speeds entrance of officers into subsequent promotion zones--in most cases this would have no short range effect, but could affect promotion rates to grades two or more ranks higher. The interrelated effects of increasing both the early promotion rate, and the in-zone attrition rate, (especially where the in-zone promotion opportunity rate approaches unity)

is felt to be a far better alternative.

On the other hand, if realignment of seniority is attempted within groups comprising two or more year groups, not only does the task become significantly more complex, but there appears to be a high probability of creating serious morale problems. The deficiencies in the fitness reports system in providing evaluation of relative performance--especially in the middle 60 percent, or so--makes realignment involving multiple year groups extremely difficult. For example, where should a superior officer, from the junior of three year groups, be "sandwiched-in" on the seniority list relative to officers in the most senior year group. If fitness reports gave a definitive picture of performance and ability for each officer concerned, this proposal would be valid. As the case exists, however, application of realignment to multiple year-group blocks of officers contains adverse morale factors.

The third recommended action, for making rates of promotion more closely parallel relative performance, is the distributed zone promotion system. If a four-year zone of consideration were utilized, it would probably be not too difficult to select the first and fourth year promotions--that is, the "fast-runners" and the "slow runners" of those who are promoted from a given year group. However, selections of the officers to be promoted in the second and third years, by far the majority of a given year group, would entail the same problems of multiple year-group realignment--the lack of sufficient definition of performance, as indicated by fitness reports, on which to base

is that to be a far-reaching administrator.

On the other hand, it realizes as similarly is necessary which should be left to be more than bound, not only does the case-by-case adjudicatory mode seem, but there seems to be a high probability of creating serious problems. The deficiencies in the three-tenure system in predicting evaluation of relative performance—especially in the middle 50 percent, or so—seem significant because multiple that issues arbitrarily difficult. For example, where should a superior officer, from the junior of three jaw-groups, be "sandwiched-in" on the seniority list relative to officers in the next senior year group. If fitness priority were a definitive factors of performance and ability for each officer considered, this proposal would be moot. As the case stands, however, application of requirement to maintain year-group ranks of officers compelling adverse moral factors.

The third recommended action, for making cases of promotion more closely parallel relative performance, is the discretionary zone promotion system. If a two-year zone of consideration were utilized, it would probably be just the ability to select the first and fourth year groups—that is, the "fast-runners" and the "slow runners" of those who are promoted from a given year group. However, relations of the officers to be promoted in the second and third years, by far the majority of a given year group, would exist the same problems of multiple year-group realignment—the lack of sufficient definition of performance, as indicated by fitness reports, as noted in the

selections. A distributed-zone of three years duration would perhaps be less complex and enjoy greater confidence of the officer corps. Assume, for a hypothetical year group, a 75 percent overall rate of promotion is dictated by long-range studies. This procedure might involve selection of 5-10 percent the first year in the zone (similar to present early promotions), 55-65 percent the second year (corresponding to present "normal" promotions), and 5-10 percent the third year (comparable to present above-the-zone promotions). (All percentages above refer to percent of the total original year group). The net result after three years would be 75 percent promotion and 25 percent attrition. The present promotion system provides for such promotion practices--without even a change of name. Enactment of the Bolte Committee recommendation would, of course, be required to go above a 5 percent early selection rate. Under the present system, the three-year selection rates would be about 5-65-5 percent for the illustration above. Earlier promotions would not necessarily be limited to only one year "ahead of schedule". However, it appears highly questionable, when present desired Navy flow rates are considered, whether exceptions to such a limitation, below selection to flag rank, are necessary or even desirable. With the technological complexity of modern weapons systems placing increasing demands on line officers of every rank, the author feels a one year reduction in time-in-grade, at each rank level, would provide the minimum time necessary to gain the experience required of the grade and, at the same time, provide sufficient time-in-grade for reliable evaluation for promotion to the next higher grade.

Recommendation

The present Navy promotion system, as it stands, provides room for a considerable increase in early promotions. Promotions of officers from below-the-zone, to the extent limited by law, is recommended to positively demonstrate that the Navy recognizes and rewards high performance on the part of its officer corps. Such action would surely make a naval career attractive to greater numbers of high caliber young officers.

Early promotions must not be made just to demonstrate that opportunity for such promotions exists--acceleration must be firmly based on merit if confidence in the promotion system is to be maintained. Two senior naval officers have sounded precautionary notes, regarding early promotions, which are pertinent:

> Somewhere along the line there is an age level below which we must not go [for accelerated promotion to a given rank]. We must insure that the exuberance of youth is properly tempered by the wisdom of experience.[1]

> Frustration often results from immaturity. The person who receives too much recognition too early may never grow up.[2]

Early promotions could be considerably increased in number, if not in depth, and still give due regard to such precautions.

Early promotions would probably be increased to a significant degree if the Secretary of the Navy's precept to the

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[1] L. S. Sabin, Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy, "Deep Selections," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 86, No. 3 (March, 1960), 51.

[2] A. E. Jarrell, Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy (Retired), "Lessons Learned From the Hump," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 86, No. 8 (August, 1960), 85.

Recommendation

The present Bar admission system, as it stands, requires that a candidate's character be early examined. Exceptions of officers from being-in-course, if the person lacked an law, if endorsed to practical knowledge that the law recognizes the proper bar performance of all part of its officer duties. Law students usually study with a local lawyer attorneys in remote numbers of high ability young officers.

Early examinations must not be made just to demonstrate the importance for some examiner either—examination must be firmly based on merit if confidence in the admission system is to be maintained. The section must address new problems, requiring early examinations, when are difficult.

> Somebody alone the time there is no one level value which we must not so free examination applying to a given model. We must insure that the endorsement of youth is properly tempered by the sense of awareness.[1]
>
> Transition often results from inexperience. The lawyer who realizes for such reconciling too early can never arise.[2]

Bars procedures must be considered, increased in number, if not in detail, and still give due regard to such provisions.

Early examinations would probably be increased to a difficulties report if the decision. I let here's reason if the

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[1] A. Smith, Vice Admiral, L. J. Ken, "Bar Examinations," Yellow Pages Legal Institute Proof Line, Vol. 14, No. 3 (March, 1969), 41.

[2] G. Jarrell, Vice Admiral, B. J. Ken (Retired), "Reasons Lawyer Free Bar Exam," Bound Brook Bar Institute Proceedings, Vol. 86, No. 8 (August, 1969), 67.

president of each selection board strongly urged "looking below the zone" for best-fitted officers without applying excessively stringent requirements for early selection. Especially in cases where in-zone selection opportunity is over about 75 percent, it seems reasonable to conclude that at least 5 percent of those below the zone would better meet the criterion of best fitted. This is based on an assumption that officers develop and become ready for promotion at a normal (bell curve) rate--as noted in the Retention Task Force study.

In addition to improving the retention of highly-qualified young officers by satisfying individual needs, the naval service also profits by proper early selections. As noted by Vice Admiral Sabin:

> Not only does he [the early-promoted officer] deserve the reward of accelerated advancement, but the organization to which he is devoting his superior abilities is entitled to the benefit of his greater talents in a position of higher responsibility.[1]

The author believes that increased early selections will become reality in the near future based on the extensive current interest in this factor of officer career management. The following excerpt of a recent news article contains some hope for improvement:

> Although most officers will be promoted "on time," and some "late," . . . to the maximum extent practicable, selection boards should take full advantage of that portion of the law which provides for 'deep selection.' "

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[1]Sabin, United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 86, No. 3, 47.

[illegible] of [illegible] policy [illegible] strongly urged Congress value the [illegible] of [illegible] officers without [illegible] [illegible] requirements for early retirement. Generally [illegible] [illegible] Congress [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

> The ChInfo statement also stressed that use of the maximum five percent below-the-zone promotions allowed by law for lower grades will bring more balance to the selection system in contrast to one very deep selection at the flag grade.
>
> It's all another step away from the strict seniority system in effect before World War I.[1]

. . . and another step toward improving the naval officer corps by increasing the retention of more outstanding officers.

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[1] Navy Times (East Edition), March 30, 1966, p. 6, in a discussion of a recent Chief of (Naval) Information policy summary dealing with "deep selections" to flag rank.

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